

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado; Gov. Lawton Chiles of Florida; Gov. Bob Miller of Nevada; Rob Reiner, founder, I Am Your Child campaign; and David A. Hamburg, president, Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Memorandum on Improving the Quality of Child Care in the United States

April 17, 1997

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Using Lessons Learned from the Military Child Development Programs to Improve the Quality of Child Care in the United States

We now know that children's earliest experiences, including those in child care, have significant effects on learning and development. I believe we all have a role to play in making sure that all of our children have a strong and healthy start in life.

The Military Child Development Programs have attained a reputation for an abiding commitment to quality in the delivery of child care. The Department of Defense's dedication to adequate funding, strict oversight, improved training and wage packages, strong family child care networks, and commitment to meeting national accreditation standards is laudatory. I believe that the military has important lessons to share with the rest of the Nation on how to improve the quality of child care for all of our Nation's children.

I therefore direct you, consistent with existing statutory authority, to share the expertise and lessons learned from the Military Child Development Programs with Federal, State, tribal, and local agencies, as well as with private and nonprofit entities, that are responsible for providing child care for our Nation's children. I further direct you, in doing so, to consult with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Administrator of General Services, and the heads of other Federal departments or agencies with

statutory authority over child care programs. I ask that you provide me with a preliminary report within 6 months, and with a final report within 1 year on actions taken and further recommendations, including recommendations on any needed or appropriate legislation. I urge you to consider the following:

- I. In consultation with States, encourage military installation child development facilities in the United States to partner with civilian child care programs in their local communities to improve the quality of service offered. The Department of Defense staff could provide assistance with local accreditation efforts, offer training as available, assist with State and local child development credentialing processes, and provide models of effective child development practices.
- II. Establish military Child Care Programs of Excellence, to the greatest extent feasible, to offer training courses to civilian child care providers. These training courses could demonstrate model practices for child care centers, family child care homes, and school-age facilities.
- III. Make widely available to the civilian child care community information on the model approaches and designs that the military uses for training and compensation, accreditation and evaluation, playground and facility design, support systems linking individual family child care providers, as well as overall financing strategies.
- IV. Establish partnerships with State or county employment and job training programs to enable Military Child Development Centers and Family Child Care Homes to serve as training locations for welfare recipients moving from welfare to work. The Department of Defense programs could provide on-the-job training, work experience, and an understanding of best practices for the delivery of child development services.

William J. Clinton

Statement on the Death of Chaim Herzog

April 17, 1997

I was informed this morning that former Israeli President Chaim Herzog had died after a long illness. I offer my heartfelt condolences to his family and to the people of Israel. Chaim Herzog not only served the Israeli people with distinction as their President for 10 years, he was a courageous soldier in the liberation of Europe and a distinguished leader in the Israeli armed forces. He will long be remembered for his years as a statesman and scholar—he personified a vibrant, emerging Israel, taking its place in the community of nations.

Statement on the Senate Decision To Bring the Chemical Weapons Convention to a Vote

April 17, 1997

I welcome today's unanimous agreement by the Senate to bring the Chemical Weapons Convention to a vote next week. This treaty—initiated by the Reagan administration, completed and signed by the Bush administration, submitted to the Senate by my administration—has been bipartisan from the beginning. Now, thanks to the good-faith efforts of Majority Leader Lott and Minority Leader Daschle—working closely with my national security team and key members of the Senate from both sides of the aisle—the Senate will be able to vote on the treaty before it goes into effect on April 29.

Over the past 2½ months, we have all gone the extra mile to work through outstanding concerns about the treaty. As a result of negotiations Senator Lott and I established, and discussions led by Senators Biden and Helms, we now have agreement on 28 conditions that will be included in the treaty's resolution of ratification when it goes to a vote, resolving virtually all of the issues that have been raised about the CWC.

Just today, our negotiators reached agreement concerning the use of riot control agents like tear gas and to require warrants for any involuntary searches of an American business or facility under the treaty's inspec-

tion provisions. We still have five issues on which we fundamentally disagree, but we are now assured, thanks to today's agreement, that they will be decided by votes of the full Senate.

These important developments reflect widespread, bipartisan, and growing support for the Chemical Weapons Convention. Yesterday, former Presidents Bush and Ford joined Secretary of State Albright in making a special appeal for ratification. Today at a congressional hearing, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell strongly reiterated his endorsement of the treaty, which also has the support of every other Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the past two decades. And three former Secretaries of Defense—Harold Brown, Elliot Richardson, and Bill Perry—released a joint statement calling for the Senate to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention.

All of these distinguished American leaders agree that by requiring countries around the world to destroy their chemical weapons stockpiles—as the United States already has decided to do—and to renounce developing or trading in chemical weapons in the future, the Chemical Weapons Convention will help make our troops safer while making it harder for rogue states and terrorists to acquire chemical weapons.

This treaty literally was “made in America,” and it also is right for America. I urge every Member of the Senate to support the Chemical Weapons Convention when it comes to a vote next week.

Proclamation 6990—Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 1997

April 17, 1997

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

A commitment to learning has been at the heart of America's progress for more than 200 years. Now, as we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, our continued success as a Nation depends on the quality of education that we provide to all our citizens.

American children must have all the tools they need to make the most of their God-